

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 204 029

PS 012 277

AUTHOR Maron, Chris
TITLE Children's Feelings About Themselves. Unit for Child Studies Selected Papers Number 1.
INSTITUTION New South Wales Univ., Kensington (Australia). School of Education.
PUB DATE 80
NOTE 13p.: For other papers in this series, see PS 012 278-285.
AVAILABLE FROM Unit for Child Studies, School of Education, University of NSW, P.O. Box 1, Kensington, NSW 2033, Australia (\$2.00: payment should be made in Australian dollars).
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Children; Childrens Games; Foreign Countries; Group Activities; *Intervention; Parent Education; *Parent Influence; Postsecondary Education; Questionnaires; *Self Concept; *Self Esteem; *Teacher Influence
IDENTIFIERS *Australia

ABSTRACT

A positive self-concept is important for all children. Parents can assess their children's feelings about themselves and improve their children's self-respect. Feelings about the self are important because they affect children's success, sense of worth, ability to love others and to learn. Adults may inadvertently undermine a child's self-esteem so that he/she does not have sufficient ego strength for taking the risks inherent in learning. Questionnaires can be used by parents to gain a more detailed understanding of a child's identity. After the level of the child's self-concept has been ascertained, many types of activity can be employed to raise the self-respect of a child who has a low self-concept. In an atmosphere of trust, teachers and parents may explore the outcomes of the following games and activities: (1) providing a personal time line on which children may record personal experiences on cards clipped to the line; (2) sharing success symbols such as photos or certificates; (3) organizing games in which children detect detracting or enhancing speech; (4) emphasizing children's strengths; (5) facilitating a positive body image; (6) aiding in the setting of attainable goals; (7) becoming aware of speech habits (for example, the over use of "should,") that diminish children's sense of self-worth; and (8) increasing children's awareness of others' perspectives through role play and role reversals. (Author/RH)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

Selected Papers

Unit for Child Studies

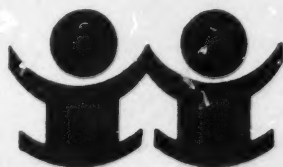
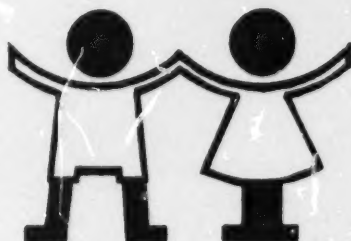
Number 1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as
received from the person or organization
originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve
reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this docu-
ment do not necessarily represent official NIE
position or policy.



"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S. Phillips

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

© Copyright 1980



School of Education

The University of New South Wales

662 2181

CHILDREN'S FEELINGS ABOUT THEMSELVES
MR CHRIS MARON

ED204029

PS012277

CHILDREN'S FEELINGS ABOUT THEMSELVES

MR. CHRIS MARON

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL, TEMPE PUBLIC SCHOOL

(Based upon a talk given at a Parent Learning Weekend held at the University of New South Wales to celebrate The Year of the Child)

I will discuss children's feelings of themselves: the undeniable importance of this topic; the sort of common practices that can enhance or lower children's feelings about themselves, and later, many practical activities that you can do to improve your child's feelings about himself or herself, and your own feelings about yourself. Throughout, the major reference I'll be using is "*100 Ways to Enhance Self-Respect in the Classroom*" (written by J. Canfield and H. Wells). This work comes from the California Institute which has as one of its school curriculum subjects "*The Raising of Children's Self-Respect in the Classroom*". It lists 106 games that you can use at school or home. It was a book written for parents in the first place, so don't be put off by the title. If you are interested, unfortunately you won't find the book anywhere in Sydney, but if you telephone Yvonne McBurnie on 76 7962, you will be able to order a copy.

At the beginning, I'll define some terms for you. When I mention *self-concept* I will be meaning all the beliefs and attitudes children have about themselves, and when I mention *self-respect* I'll be meaning the degree of favourableness or the degree of positiveness about this self-concept and just how favourably children view themselves.

I'd also like to give you four reasons why the self picture for a child is so important. First of all, to escape this affliction that's been labeled in our generation "*the identity crisis*", children must view themselves as distinct individuals with a unique body, a unique set of wishes, with unique feelings, and with a life history (past, present, and future) that will be unmatched. The book I've mentioned, and the activities I'm going to mention later on, will help increase this idea of uniqueness which is very important to the child's good adjustment.

The second reason why the self picture for children (their feelings about themselves) is so important is that American psychiatrists, who also support these self-enhancement programmes, generally agree that children and adults are usually living with an identity that is either a success or a failure. At first glance, it may be thought that we are living with a *mixed* identity, but psychiatrists are generally in agreement that one feeling overwhelms the other and children have either a success feeling or a failure feeling. It is a very black and white thing, and the book is a book of activities to switch all feelings over to the success identity.

The third reason why the feelings about the self are so important is that theorists are adamant that loving and caring for others is an impossibility without self-love. In the social world of our child at home and at

school, respect for others is a necessity for good adjustment, and this respect for others is dependent, first of all, upon respect for oneself.

A fourth reason why children's feelings about themselves are so important, is derived from the research literature that tells us learning increases when self-respect increases. Research has been carried out, for instance, where children's self-respect upon entering school has been assessed and thirty months or so later, their reading scores have been tested. The children who had the highest self-respect in kindergarten had the highest reading scores 2½ years later. They have found, in America, that self-respect scores are a better predictor of future success than the intelligence quotient tests that we have been using for so long. How they got these self-respect scores I will come to later. As a result of these findings in California, for example, one of the major aims of education has been unanimously listed in all the schools as self-respect. When they added it all up most teachers put self-respect as the fourth major aim of education behind reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Self-respect determines who you are, what you think you are, what you do and what you can become. I give you this example:

Jack is a good kid. He's a typical boy so he sometimes gets into trouble, but never anything too bad. One day Jack is playing with some other boys and they decide to steal some cigarettes and smoke them. Jack is scared, but excited. His little brother hears what has happened and tells their father, who loses his temper with Jack.

Now what does Jack say? What does he really believe about all this?

"I didn't want to steal but, well, the gang kind of, you know ... besides I didn't steal the cigarettes --- Charlie did. I only smoked one and I hated it. It was a good lesson. I'll never smoke those awful things again."

Now why was that Jack's answer? He must protect his self-esteem. He rationalises about being forced into that situation and by thinking what a strong lesson it taught him. He has taken what was objectively a "bad" incident and turned it into something good, so his image of himself as a "good kid" is retained. He has maintained a consistent, favourable self-concept. He may even have increased his self-respect.

To maintain or increase self-respect is the prime motivation for all normal behaviour. Our most important ability, and the most important ability for our children to have, is to be able to accept one's own behaviour. If children cannot accept their own behaviour and we cannot accept ours, then our feelings about our "self" damage our self-respect. You will find in textbooks these days sentences like this:

There is no value judgement more important to man than the judgement he passes upon himself. There is no factor more decisive in his psychological development than the judgement he passes upon himself.

Now that example I've given you about the cigarettes, while it shows the wonderful protective quality of our self-concepts, also shows what a *consistent* self-picture it is and how difficult it would be to change somebody's self-concept. Difficult, but not impossible. The book I mentioned earlier has shown this to be so. The crucial ages for forming or changing early damage to the self-concept are generally agreed, again by American psychiatrists, to be between the ages 5 and 10. The failure identity in that black and white picture which I painted before can best be avoided by the child

attaining a good self-picture before the age of 10. If children have passed the age of 10 and a failure identity dominates their feelings about themselves, it is still possible to change it, but the difficulty increases year after year.

At the age of 5 the child comes to school. Children entering kindergarten have learned much about the world, and they usually feel they can cope with it. No matter what their environment was, they feel optimistic about the future. Very few children come to school as failures. No child comes to school labelled as a failure; it is the school that pins that label of failure upon a child. It is the school that gives children the failure identity that they acquire before the age of 10. Certainly, there is a lot of development in that way from age 5 to 10. So teachers have to have faith in education as a tool for changing a child's self-respect from something unfavourable to something at least tolerable. Parents also need faith in their ability too, to change children's feelings about themselves; and the way to do this, the techniques to achieve this, I'll be outlining later.

Before doing so, however, I'd like to describe some general practices in school and home that affect the self-concept. These practices start very early in life and they can be found nearly everywhere. At home, take the instance of the crawling baby who reaches out to take something valuable. The mother might say "No, no, no, mustn't touch. Bad boy" and the child has learned that things are more important than he is. Into his self-concept has gone a message the mother didn't intend at all. Repeated responses of this kind teach the child: *"I do things wrongly. I must be bad."* The message is completely the reverse of what that parent intended.

And take the situation at school where all learning is the result of a risk-taking situation. John might be asked to write a report; it will be evaluated. He must make a verbal reply; it could be laughed at. He has to do a piece of art; it will be judged. All learning at school is the result of risk-taking situations, and in each situation that child is risking error, judgement, disapproval -- and in some schools, even punishment. What children are really risking in each of those instances, at a deeper level, is their self-concept.

Imagine that I have in front of me two stacks of poker chips: one stack 100 poker chips high, and another stack just 20 poker chips high. Each stack represents a child's self-concept, with the number of chips indicating the extent of the child's self-regard. At school, depending upon their experiences of success or failure, their number grows or diminishes. If Jane has 100 in her stack from past success, she is more willing to risk again. Her self-concept can afford a failure. Jack, with only, say, 20 poker chips in his stack is unwilling to risk his self-concept. In learning situations he will rationalise. When a teacher says to do something, he will say *"I don't want to do it"*. That really translates as *"I think I can't do it"*. He might say about work the teacher sets: *"This is stupid"*. Now that translates as *"I am stupid"*. That child is unwilling to risk. Now what must be done? Children with the low number of poker chips are like shoppers on a limited budget shopping for bargains. They'll be looking very carefully to see where they might possibly take the smallest of risks, but more importantly, they will need to build up their supplies. Teachers, of course, try to do this in different ways --- they try to make the learning step so small that the child will have to succeed, for instance. Nevertheless, the most important thing for that child is to build up his or her supply of poker chips. And how that is done is the essence of *"100 Ways to Enhance Self-Respect in the Classroom"*.

School practices, however, do make one wonder about their effect on a child's self-concept: for instance, the habit of grading children into classes on ability, the publication of marks, numerical marks on school reports ...

I've seen this as young as First Class, age 6, where they're listing the child's place in class, even the place in the whole school, so the child might be in place 138 out of 138 possible places in First Class. I've seen this in some of our schools, not many, but some still do that! There is also the effect of repeating a year during those crucial ages 5 to 10, as opposed to the practice of automatic progression through the primary years; one also questions the age-old custom of teachers making star charts for children --- charts where one or two egos might be boosted, one or two self-respects enhanced, and where the rest are losers. These sorts of competitions, where there are one or two winners and the rest are losers, are the sort of competitions in school that have brought children to the failure identity that some of them have.

How can you assess your children's present feelings about themselves? I have included some of the simple questionnaires that can be used to gauge a child's first thoughts and feelings about himself or herself. The first way that you can gain some idea of self-respect is to give your child sentence beginnings similar to those I've listed below, although I have to point out that children of eight and younger are far too self-centred for their scores to be accepted with complete reliability. (The children that I have given these to have been aged nine or ten years.) I then assess their scores on this and other tests. Through the activities I am about to indicate, I then endeavour to raise the feelings of self-respect in the children across a school population --- and it can be done. We have one researcher at this University who did her Master's Degree on increasing children's self-respect. She took a whole school population, measured the children's feelings about themselves through these sort of tests and then through activities similar to those I am about to mention, succeeded in raising the entire school population's feelings about themselves. It can be said with justification that she was also increasing their capacity to learn because of the studies that have shown that relationship.

The sentence beginnings are:

- My schoolwork ...
- I want to know ...
- Our family ...
- I feel ...
- The train ...
- Much of the time ...
- Money often ...
- I suffer ...
- If I ...
- Friends ...
- My mother ...
- There are times ...
- Eating ...
- My mind ...
- I sleep ...
- My greatest longing ...
- My imagination ...
- Most girls ...
- Most boys ...
- I fear ...
- My greatest trouble ...
- Secretly I ...
- I cannot understand what makes me ...
- My childhood ...
- I feel most proud of ...

When you look at the answers, you get contented answers from 10 year olds as follows:

<u>Sentence beginning</u>	<u>Answer</u>
The future ...	will be very beautiful.
My mother	is the best thing in the whole world.
I feel ...	normal.
Our family ...	is proud of me and I am proud of them.
My schoolwork ...	is good and getting better.

The following are some examples of disturbing answers.

There are times ...	when I feel not wanted.
I suffer ...	but I always get hit.
I want to know ... (this is from a girl in Fourth Class)	how I'm going to pass in High School.
The future ... (from another girl of that age)	in my life is not getting any better.
I cannot understand what makes me ...	bad in class.
My mind ...	is not very good.

Just for a starting point you can get some idea of your child's feelings through sentence beginnings. You will also come across many unexpected answers. I've written just one down here: "*I want to know ... how Earth and Heaven communicate.*" You will get these wonderful unexpected answers. Once you've done sentence completion as a starting point, you'll want something you can put a few figures to. Here is an example of a questionnaire developed by Pauline Sears, an American psychologist, and adjusted by Dr. Ian Smith at Sydney University:

	Excellent	Very Good	Better than Most	O.K.	Not so Good
Being good at sports					
Understanding something new					
Making friends easily with my own sex					
Solving problems					
Having brains to get a good job					
Being able to read well					
Being a good size and build for my age					
Remembering what I've learned					
Letting others have their own way sometimes					
Having nice clothes					
Learning maths quickly					
Being a good student					
Being a leader					

	Excellent	Very Good	Better than Most	O.K.	Not so Good
One to get things started with my own sex					
Listening to what others are saying					
Being good-looking					
Making other people feel good					
Being active in social events					
Writing creative stories and poems					
Being a good athlete					
Getting along with others					
Having plenty of friends					

Children are able to rate themselves on this list, but, as I said earlier, not before the age of nine or so. This sort of questionnaire could help you see how your child's self-respect compares to other children of a similar age and would also give you a first impression of your child's feelings.

At the school I'm at now we give the children these kinds of questionnaires and then make note of those who have what would be termed a failure identity. We don't expect a favourable answer to every single question, of course, but if, on the whole, the children are continually ticking something like "Not so Good" and doing it in all earnestness (you have a word to those children first of all to see that they've understood everything), you talk first about possible reasons for answers and then you involve those children in the sort of activities that I'm going to describe to you. But first, I'll show you one or two other questionnaires. A favourite one in America is:

"I'm a person who ... "

	Very much like me	A little like me	Not like me
I'm a person who has many friends			
I'm a person who needs a lot of help			
I'm a person who usually does well at school			
I'm a person who has trouble going to sleep at night			
I'm a person who shows I am bothered when I lose a game			
I'm a person who feels I have to figure out my own problems			
I'm a person who is good at a lot of things			

	Very much like me	A little like me	Not like me
I'm a person who usually feels well			
I'm a person who can't do anything very well			
I'm a person who is punished a lot for little things			

These questionnaires can help to show your children's present feelings about themselves. The next question is how to improve them. Now at home, of course, one of the obvious ways of raising a child's self feelings would be the use of praise. The degree of responsibility given to the child, or the amount of adult trust shown, also benefits the child's self-respect as does, of course, avoiding the comparing of his achievements negatively with others. At school, the most obvious way, besides that of praise, to raise a child's self-respect, is to relate his specific learning skills to more general learning skills. When a child comes up with a beautiful drawing it isn't sufficient to say *"That's a good drawing"*. A teacher, a parent would better say *"That's a good drawing; you have learned to use crayon quickly and well."* You've related a child's mere artistic skill to a more general learning skill and such children return to their place, not with the thought in their minds that they are good artists (they already knew that) but with their self-concept increased because they realise they have learning skills. They have an ability to learn generally. They would gain a few more of those poker chips that I mentioned earlier because of this sense of achievement.

Another way to enhance children's feelings about themselves in the classroom is to teach processes and not products, not fact-fact-fact. Fact-fact-fact leads to tests of fact-fact-fact and the children have more and more difficulty, at least in the primary ages, of trying to swallow and remember all these facts and their self-respect has more potential for being damaged. When these tests are given to them, where they have to list so many facts, they are bound to fail often. Primary schools in New South Wales, as you know, are switching to the teaching of processes, the teaching of ways to get the facts, facts that the child selects and not the teacher. You know the Chinese proverb: *"Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime."* This is the sort of teaching that is being attempted in some of our schools to improve children's feelings about themselves. Too many of our schools are giving a fish a day. It is affecting children's feeling about themselves because they have to reproduce the answers to those questions instead of being taught how to find them.

Now, having talked of ways of evaluating the self concept, I'm going to give you actual activities or games that will improve these self feelings. These games and activities that I mention will need an atmosphere of trust; they will need to have everyone participating and you and the child have to stop dwelling on the negative past. It involves a different attitude to boasting: the child must be taken on ego trips.

First of all, it is believed that there are seven ways, or a sequence of seven types of activity, to raise a child's self respect. The first kind deal with the uniqueness of a child: here, children do things like make a personal time line or recording the great personal experiences of their lives using cards and paper clips along a long piece of heavy string; there, on the long piece of heavy string, is their life. In this way John's life can be

compared to the lives of his brothers and sisters, or, in the classroom, to that of other pupils. It shows the uniqueness of them. Children can also play a game where they go around the room saying their name with the adjective in front of their name describing their feelings: *"I'm angry Sally, and that's tired Billy, and that's happy Miss Jones!"* In games like this, they find they have a name that is just their name. A two or three year old's proudest possession is often his or her name. It stamps their uniqueness. This sort of game also shows them the feelings of others.

Another game involves a box with a mirror in it. You ask the class *"Who do you think is the most special person in the whole world?"* Individually, they come and look into this box; this box has the face of the most special person in the whole world. Without saying anything they then return to their seat. You have the entire class do this; when they've all gone back to their seats, you say to the class: *"How does it feel to know that YOU are the most special person in the world?"* The glass is a mirror reflecting the face of those who look in it and the children discuss their uniqueness, their bodies, their wishes, their achievements, their past, present and hoped-for future, that gives each one that special individuality.

In order to demonstrate their uniqueness children can make, in class, what we call a "pride line". They write down all the statements that they are proud of: things done for parents, for a friend, work at school, use of free time, ability to earn money, habits, something they bought recently, something they tried hard for, something they have shared, or thoughts they had about people that were perhaps different; the pride line shows the uniqueness of each person's thoughts. This all helps to avoid the child's identity crisis. They come to know they are someone special, they know they are not like anyone else in that home, that street, or that school. At the end of each school day, and this can, of course, be done when the child arrives home, the students share, briefly, the successes they had had during the day.

At my school, just before we leave, we ask some children what they have learned that day. It might be microscopically small perhaps, but each child, with practice, after much discussion, knows that they have gone out of that classroom with some new increment. It may not be of knowledge, but of an attitude, of something they have discovered about themselves, and they will have learned something at least, in each school day, and the child's self-concept has grown because of this; their stacks of poker chips have increased.

One method that we have had good results with at my school, in raising the self-respect of children, is to have children bring to school five success symbols. They bring these success symbols in a bag, and teachers do this as well. These record or symbolise some past success or successes. They might be photos, medals, certificates, autographs, newspaper bits about the child, trophies, or ribbons, and the children give their feelings about them as well. Their feelings are shared, and they look at these five objects and know they have had some success in their lives. When you try this game with your children, and ask them what five things they have at home that would give them the feeling of success, and you see what five items they present to you, see where those five items are. Are they stashed away at the bottom of drawers and never seen? Are they in the child's view each day? The things that are brought to our school on that sort of occasion are then kept in prominent places on public view, and the child shares his or her successes. They do not have to search at the back of drawers for them!

There are three games that go together that have probably produced more change in the way children feel about themselves than any others - at least in my use of them. I'll describe them in order. First of all, you get children to understand the meaning of what we call "killer statements". As

you pass along a playground and you hear children saying things like "We don't want to play with you", or "That's a silly game", or "Only sissies do that", or "Can't you catch?", or "You don't know the rules of this game", you are hearing common killer statements that are made by children. In my school, children keep a record of all the killer statements they hear in just one lunch time. For example, I've had children who have collected 600 killer statements. Now consider 600 statements like that heard to be said, in just one lunch hour, at a very normal school!

Our second step was to give children at our school, as they did in California, two tags, one is worn on the left and the other on the right hand side of the chest. These tags are of different colours and when children make a killer statement they tear off a little piece of the tag on their right hand side. On the left side, where the heart is, is another tag; the child tears off a tiny piece of this cardboard, say 2" x 2", when he or she has been the target of a killer statement. When this game was first played, in my school and in California, the results were very similar. Most children had no tags left at the end of the first day. They had so many killer statements said to them that they had completely torn away this tag, which means their feelings had been torn away; their number of poker chips had been torn away; their feelings about themselves had been destroyed. Some children lost their right hand tag faster than others. These, of course, are the guilty people responsible for making killer statements. Some children in our schools do not make killer statements.

The opposite of a killer statement we call a "car wash" statement. When a car goes through a car wash it starts at one end, dirty (or, if we could give it feelings, unhappy) and when it emerges at the other end, of course, it's clean and shiny (and happy). The same can happen with a child. After discussion with the class of a vocabulary of strength words, we look at a person who is feeling unhappy and miserable and, with great caution, we get from that class the list of all the qualities they like about that boy or girl. It might be their looks, their clothes, their objects, or just their ability to keep their desk clean. Everyone in my class, and in the classes I've had in the past, has been able to list for me at least two things each and this makes a list of about 60 favourable qualities admired in a person. We line up the person at the start of a tunnel of children and they pat the child on the back and genuinely and sincerely say one of the car wash statements. "*I like the way you can swim so well.*" The child emerges after this tunnel of compliments feeling much different to when they entered. We also play this game with plasticene; using car wash statements we build up the child's self-respect and we increase a ball of plasticene belonging to them into bigger and bigger shapes. The child's feelings are then improved and they go home with more "poker chips" than when they arrived.

Having done these things at school, I find after a fortnight or so of practice, the two tags, which I mentioned earlier, are usually intact. I then go through the playground, and instead of hearing 600 killer statements, it might be down to 40 or 50 or so. And, of course, if there are not killer statements around, then self feelings are not being damaged. I would say that you and I and our children, are what we are and do what we do, and become what we become because of the killer statements and car wash statements that have been said to us through the course of our lives. Our motivation is affected by the feelings of others directed towards us.

A second way of strengthening self respect is one I've already mentioned in passing: look at the child's strengths. The most effective way to develop a person's full potential is to look at that person's strengths. This means that some of us have to change our attitudes. "*You must be modest*", "*You mustn't brag*", "*You mustn't boast*", "*You mustn't tell anybody you did this*". A child needs some outlet, sometime, someplace, somewhere to say what he or

she has done and this is not usually deemed proper in our society. We have to look carefully and find a time and a place for it. In order to do this we have, at our school, sessions that we call "strength bombardment" sessions. A child, like the one at the start of the car wash game, stands, and after a discussion of strength words, is just bombarded by the class with all the admirable qualities that others see in him or her and, like the car wash game, that list, after it has been displayed with photos of the child, is then given to that child to keep. This is a record, and it will be something cherished by that child for a long time. The child keeps the record of the qualities that others see in him or her as admirable.

To look at strengths, also, you ask the children in the class or your own children at home, what nickname they would like. We're all used to nicknames fitting children better than the names their parents gave them, and some of these are closer to killer statements than car wash statements. Ask the child what nicknames he or she likes and boys will say things like "Tiger", "Muscles", "Flash", "Bear", and the girls will give you names that they like. If you have overseas students in your class, they may tell you the Japanese word for "petal" or "honey", and they seem to choose the loveliest of nicknames. You go for weeks or months, as I've done in my classes, calling your children just by their nicknames --- nicknames that make them feel proud, that raise their self-respect, increase their poker chips, and give them a feeling better than the one they had at the start.

Another way of raising a child's self-respect is called "Who Am I?" They find out about themselves and the things they like to do. It's an exploration into self-knowledge. Also important in the self-concept is acceptance of the body. Research has shown that only 10% of people accept their body with some degree of favourableness. If asked about our body, 90% of us pick on parts we don't like. We wish we had bigger muscles; we wish we had better eyesight; we wish we had slimmer builds; we wish for something or other and only 10% are content. We need to get our children, at home or at school, to accept their body. To help, they can stand in front of a full-length mirror with five or six friends behind them. They bombard themselves with what they see as their strengths and the moment they lapse, their five or six friends (who have been practising for a while and who have given thought to the qualities they like in the other person) jump in, and, as this person is looking at his or her body in the mirror, they bombard them with strengths they see in that person.

The fifth way of raising self-respect is in the matter of goal setting. Children have to understand what it is they are doing and whether it's getting them what they want. If it's not getting them what they want, they need to understand that they are the people who can change it. They have to be helped in setting their goals. "What would you like to do?" "What would you like to accomplish?" "What do you wish would happen?" "What would you like to do better?" "What do you wish you had more time for?" "What do you wish you had more money for?" "What are your unfulfilled ambitions?" These are the sort of questions you should be asking children. But sometimes they seem unable to know where to start: they often need an adult to help them. You set some tiny reachable goal and this will raise the child's beliefs that he or she is responsible for their own actions and can change the direction of their lives, and this raises self-respect.

I'll mention just one other goal-setting example. At our school (and this can be done at home as well), we have, on one of our back walls, a large "goal post", made with strips of cardboard. Each child is given a 2" x 2" strip of cardboard and they write on it an aim for the day --- an aim to be reached, one of their goals. It may be something to do with sport, or lunch time, or something to do with school; it might be to get more spelling right than last time, or to do a neater page in his or her book than last time. The child's little strip of cardboard is placed below the goalpost. At the begin-

ning of the next day, the teacher puts the goals that have been achieved above the goalpost line and removes the others: failures are not discussed. There is a discussion of the goals that were reached and more goal setting might take place. This sort of thing is something that can be done at home as well.

6 Part six relates to the language of the self. Our language affects our thinking. What people say to us, the words that are used to describe us and our children affect the way they think about themselves. One of the most negative is the word "should". Our culture tells us what we should do, and should be like. "*Girls 'should' look like Marilyn Monroe*" say beauty people, and any girl who isn't, is failing; these narrow standards lead to the failure of identity. This tyranny of "should" is equivalent to being dictated to by outside forces. You need to discuss with the child "*WHY should you?*" and the difference between should and ought.

Also, in the language of self, you need to remove from children their idea of "*I am bad because ...*" when they've only done one bad thing. You need to get across to children the idea that between good and bad are a thousand little steps of goodness and badness and no-one is at one end of the scale of either goodness or badness, and that one tiny bad incident doesn't put them down at the end of the scale. You make them realise their good points and that while something they did may have been bad, and their behaviour was bad, it doesn't make them a bad person.

7 Part seven concerns relationship with others. As I've said before, to have a favourable relationship with others it is necessary that children like themselves. Liking oneself is a prerequisite for getting on well with others. I'll mention one game that will make them understand about getting on with others. Children pick up an imaginary pair of glasses and they put on these glasses which are their "feeling" glasses. It might be their "happy" glasses, and they view everything through "happy" eyes --- or "sad" eyes, or the "nobody-loves-me" eyes --- and they have many, many, many different pairs of magic feeling glasses. And, after they understand their feelings and the feelings of others, they can get on to discussing feelings that people they know have. Do you know a teacher or parent who always seems to wear one pair of feeling glasses?

Another way of changing feelings about the self that has been mentioned in the research as having some success is role play and role reversals. If you put a delinquent, for instance, in the role of the policeman, and somebody else in the role of the delinquent, they can change roles and act out behaviours of the reversed role. It has been seen that extensive sessions of this can change feelings towards others and feelings towards oneself.

Ten or twelve years ago, when teachers went to school in the morning, I suggest that most of them would have got in their car and thought "*What can I teach my children today?*" and they would have driven home judging the success of their day from what they had taught their children. Five years ago, teachers would have got into their cars on their way to school and thought not "*What can I teach my children?*" but "*What can my children learn today?*" and they would have driven home in the afternoon judging the success of their day from what their children had learned that day. Now, some teachers, hopefully, are getting into their cars in the morning and thinking primarily "*What can I do for the self-respect of all those I come into contact with today?*" And when they drive home in the afternoon, they might gauge the success of their day at school, not by what was taught or learnt, as important as it is, of course --- because it relates to self-concept --- but by how much they enhanced any child's feelings of himself or herself that day. As parents, perhaps we should also measure our success in raising children by what we have done for their feelings of themselves.